

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.

December

A Birth to Remember

INTRODUCTION

What Christmas traditions do you observe?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read Luke 2:1-7

Note: Bethlehem was a three to four-day journey from Galilee. It is also where King David was from. Even though Mary and Joseph were engaged, their marriage was not consummated (with intercourse) until later (Matt 1:24-25).

1. Why would Mary & Joseph take such a difficult journey just to complete a census?
2. Why was it important that Jesus was born in Bethlehem? **Micah 5:2**
3. What is the significance of being her firstborn, especially a son? Vs 7; **Ex 3:12**

Read Luke 2:8-20

Note: One should not romanticize the occupation of shepherds. In general shepherds were dishonest (Sanh. 25b) and unclean according to the standards of the law. They represent the outcasts and sinners for whom Jesus came.¹ Shepherds would have been tending their flock in April to November, not December. We do not know, therefore, exactly when Jesus was born. December 25 was adopted as the date to celebrate his birth in the fourth century by Christians in the West.²

4. What is significant about shepherds getting the word about the birth instead of royalty?
5. Who does the angel say is to be the recipient of the gospel (good news)? Vs 10
6. What three titles are given to Jesus? Vs 11 What is their significance?
7. What is the “sign” that the angels were sent from God? vs. 12
8. Jesus’ birth was shameful to the families of Mary and Joseph (because they weren’t married) and they did not have a traditional family celebration. Who took the families’ place? Vv 13-14.

Note: “Peace” in verse 14 refers to the fullness of blessing which the Savior/Christ/Lord brings and is essentially a synonym for salvation (cf. Acts 10:36).³

9. When did the shepherds tell others what happened? Vs 17 If you were a shepherd trying to explain what you had been told (by angels) how would you convince them it was true? Vv 17-18 What was people’s reaction? Vs 18
10. What did Mary think about all that was going on? Vs 19 Do you think she understood her baby would eventually be sacrificed to become the savior?

APPLICATION

What difference does *your* spiritual birth make?

¹ ³ Stein, R. H. (2001). *Vol. 24: Luke* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (108, 109). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

² Paschall, F. H., & Hobbs, H. H. (1972). *The teacher's Bible commentary: A concise, thorough interpretation of the entire Bible designed especially for Sunday School teachers* (638). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.